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HIDDEN HARMONIES

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IN ÆDIBUS MUSEI TUSCULANI

OPUSCULA VOL. XIX

HIDDEN HARMONIES

Manuscript and print on the North Atlantic fringe, 1500–1900

Edited by
MATTHEW JAMES DRISCOLL
NIOCLÁS MAC CATHMHAOIL

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We dedicate this volume to the memory of our late colleague and friend
Richard Sharpe (1954–2020)

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The Arnamagnæan Commission decided in 1937 to publish a series of works which fall within the Commission's field of research. Publications in the series, which has the general title *Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana*, may be in one of the Nordic languages or in English, German or French. As the fifty-fourth volume of the series is now issued *Opuscula* XIX. The volumes published under this heading comprise shorter studies on older Icelandic, Norwegian, Faroese, Danish and Swedish philology, as well as articles dealing with manuscripts in other languages which are part of the Arnamagnæan Collection; these studies can take the form of or include editions of shorter works and fragmentary texts. As a departure from previous practice, this volume also presents articles on material in Irish and Scottish Gaelic, and is, like *Opuscula* XV, published in 2017, devoted to a single theme: post-print manuscript cultures in Iceland, Ireland, Gaelic-speaking Scotland and the Faroe Islands in the period 1500–1900. Entitled *Hidden harmonies*, the volume is edited by Matthew James Driscoll (Copenhagen) and Nioclás Mac Cathmhaoil (Derry).

Matthew James Driscoll *Svend Larsen*

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The materiality and symbolism of Gaelic works in print and manuscript in Renaissance Ireland

Pádraig Ó Macháin

A discussion of post-print Irish book culture encompasses not just the post-Gutenberg context of Renaissance Europe, but also the more specific context of post-1551 Ireland, after the introduction of the printing press to the country. Both provide a backdrop to investigations of manuscripts and printed books in Irish in the sixteenth century. At the centre are the practitioners of book-craft, the scholar-scribes of late-medieval Ireland. During a period of great social, political and religious change in Ireland, the intercultural encounters experienced by these professional scholars must have been many. Understanding the scholars and their books helps our appreciation of the novelty and innovation that these encounters entailed, whether occurring in the confined surroundings of Reformation Dublin, or in the expansive, pre-urban landscape of autonomous Ireland. Because the Irish scholar-scribe was traditionally involved in virtually every aspect of the preparation and making of his books, a useful approach to identifying the evidence for these boundary experiences is through an examination of non-textual elements of Irish books of the time, both printed and hand-written. In what follows we will look at the archaeology of the early printed book in Irish and at innovative features in Irish vellum manuscripts that were contemporary with the emergence of those books.

I am indebted to Dr Fearghus Ó Fearghail and to Prof. Timothy O'Neill for reading and commenting on sections of this paper in draft.

Print culture

In addition to bibliographical listing and recording, research into the coming of print to Ireland involves an analysis of the material of which the books were made. This is of relevance to manuscript production in that the acceleration of paper to a point of complete dominance in native book-production by 1600 became one of the most revolutionary and innovatory aspects of post-print culture in Ireland. As this has been dealt with in another publication, we will concentrate here on some wider aspects of the question of materiality.[1]

It is important to state that, as a vehicle for the transmission of Gaelic literature, print, when it began in Ireland, had a negligible impact. Traditional material in Irish, prose and poetry, continued to be primarily manuscript-based for the next three centuries. Within those manuscripts, however, in the matter of the organisation, layout and presentation of material – and occasionally (in the later period particularly) subject matter – the influence of print becomes discernible, albeit sporadically, as time progresses. Despite this, it is worth remembering that, for very many years, Gaelic literature in manuscript and Gaelic literature in print can be said to have occupied parallel universes.

Printing in Ireland begins in the middle of the sixteenth century. This was a time when paper as a material in Gaelic manuscripts was still uncommon. The printed book was also set apart by questions of motivation and of location. It occurs exclusively in the context of colonisation and Reformation, informed by the Elizabethan policy of prosecuting conquest on religious grounds as well as military. This is true of books printed in English and in Irish. Moreover, in a country where society was still overwhelmingly pre-urban, early printing in Ireland is an urban phenomenon. At the level of materiality, there are interconnections between some of these early printed works that are of great interest.

The earliest book known to have been printed in Ireland is the *Boke of the common praier*, printed ('at the commaundement of [...] Sir Anthonie Sentleger

[1] Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'The emergence of the Gaelic paper manuscript: A preliminary investigation', *Paper and the paper manuscript: A context for the transmission of Gaelic literature*, ed. Pádraig Ó Macháin (Cork, 2019), pp. 21–43.

[...] Lorde deputie of Irelande') by Humfrey Powell in 1551.[2] Powell did his printing, he tells us, 'in the great toure by the Crane'.[3] The Crane was the customs house at the foot of Winetavern Street, Dublin, and beside it was the tower – 'Prickett's Tower' – at the eastern end of Merchant's Quay.[4] The paper used in the *Boke* bears the watermark of a gloved left hand with a five-petal flower on a short stem extending from the longest finger. This watermark, measuring 84 × 35 mm, bears the number '3' on the palm of the glove, with the letters 'B' and 'A' on either side, and a *fleur de lis* below.[5] These dimensions, and those of the chain-lines, which are spaced at intervals of 27–28 cm, help to establish a connection between the paper used in this book and in an administrative manuscript begun just five years later: the Acts of the Privy Council in Ireland 1556–1571.[6]

The presence of the same watermark in the paper used to record the Acts of the Privy Council serves to underline the homogeneity of the material used and its connection with printing and officialdom in a city where only one printer,

[2] *The boke of the common praier and administracion of the sacramentes, and other rites and ceremonies of the churche: after the vse of the Churche of England. Dvbliniae in officina Hvmfredi Povveli. Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum. Anno Domini M. D. LI.* For Powell see E.R. M'Clintock Dix, 'Humfrey Powell, the first Dublin printer', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 27 (1908–1909), pp. 213–16.

[3] *Boke of the common praier*, colophon f. cxl: 'Imprinted by Humfrey Powell, Printer to the Kynges Maiestie, in his hyghnesse realme of Ireland, dwellynge in the citee of Dublin in the great toure by the Crane. Cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum. Anno Domini. M. D. LI.' Fifteen years later Powell had moved his press half a mile or so south to St. Nicholas Street, where in 1566 he printed *A brefe declaration of certein principall articles of religion set out by order and aucthoritie as well of the right honorable Sir Henry Sidney knyght of the most noble order*.

[4] J.T. Gilbert, *A history of the city of Dublin* I–III (Dublin, 1861), I, pp. 356–70; idem, *Calendar of ancient records of Dublin, volume 2* (Dublin, 1891), p. 555; H.B. Clarke, *Irish historic towns atlas no. 11 Dublin, part I, to 1610* (Dublin, 2002), p. 9.

[5] Copy inspected: RIA SR 23 M 57, a fragmentary copy that had been used as binder's waste (E.R. McClintock Dix, 'Note upon the leaves of the first book printed in Dublin discovered in the Academy', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 27C (1908–1909), pp. 404–06). Many sixteenth-century watermarks of this category (but not this precise watermark) are displayed in the Thomas L. Gravell Watermark Archive (<gravell.org>) under the descriptor 'hand'. Watermarks from early paper in Ireland, printed and manuscript, are displayed on <watermarks.celt.dias.ie>.

[6] RIA MS 24 F 16.

FIGURE 1: Watermark in 1571 Broadside (Cambridge University, Parker Library, Fr. MS Box 2, item 5), photographed from rear.
Photo: The Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge.

Government-licensed and controlled, was at work at any given time from 1551 to 1680.[7] The manuscript of these Acts consists of 343 folios with a single watermark throughout, identical in measurement, components and position in the chain-lines to that described above for the *Boke of the common praier*. From this it seems reasonably clear that one of the paper-stocks of the Government stationary-supply was put to use for both government records in manuscript and the first book printed in Ireland, a publication of the Reformed Church.

Not only was there a homogeneity of material, but also one of location of early printing in Ireland. The first book ever to be printed in Gaelic type was *Aibidil Gaoidheilge, et Caiticiosma*, a translation of the Catechism from the Book

[7] Mary Pollard, *Dublin's trade in books 1550–1800* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 2–3.

of Common Prayer, with additional material and linguistic introduction by Seaán Ó Cearnaigh, Treasurer of St. Patrick's Cathedral.[8] The creation of the Gaelic type was sponsored by a grant from Elizabeth I.[9] The *Aibidil* was printed, as the title page usefully tells us, on the 20th of June 1571 (a Sunday) 'ós chionn an dhroichid' ('above the bridge', or, 'above the head of the Bridge'), and paid for by Alderman John Ussher. 'Above the bridge' might sound vague to us today, but there was only one bridge that crossed the Liffey in Dublin at the time, where Fr Matthew Bridge stands today.[10] The reference to 'ós chionn an dhroichid' suggests that it was in the tower at the western end of Merchant's Quay, the Bridge Tower, a property of the Ussher family,[11] 100 metres from Prickett's Tower, that this printing took place.

Perhaps as befits the first tentative use of the Elizabethan fount and the first appearance of insular minuscule in a printed book, this is a publication small in format and extent, and delicate to handle. Only four copies of this book are known to exist.[12] The Trinity College copy consulted for this study measures 132 × 82 mm, and, including the title page, comprises 56 pages. Having been side-stitched by a later binder, the original sewing has been lost. Nevertheless the position of the watermark, high and quartered in the upper gutter, together with the vertical chain-lines, indicates that the *Aibidil* is an octavo book, which the signatures show was gathered in fours.[13] Because of the format, a definitive

[8] *Aibidil Gaoidheilge, & Caiticiosma .i. forcheadal nó teagasg Criosdaighe, maille lé hairtiogluibh dhairidhe don riaghal Criosduighe, is ínghabhtha, dá gach aon da mbhé fómánta do reachd Día agus na bannríoghan sa ríghe so, do tairngeamh as laidean, agus as gaillbhérla go gaoidheilg, lá Seaan o kearnaigh. [...] Do buaileadh so ágcló ghaoidheilge, a mbaile Atha cliath, ar chosdas mhaighisdir Sheón uiser aldarman, ós chionn an dhroichid an 20. lá do Iuín. 1571.* One of the additional pieces was a translation of *A brefe declaration of certein principall articles of religion* that had been printed by Powell in 1566 (n. 3 above): see Brian Ó Cuív ed., *Aibidil Gaoidheilge & Caiticiosma: Seaán Ó Cearnaigh's Irish primer of religion published in 1571* (Dublin, 1994), p. 16 and Appendix II.

[9] Ó Cuív, *Seaán Ó Cearnaigh's Irish primer*, p. 2.

[10] Gilbert, *History of the city of Dublin* I, pp. 322–25.

[11] ibid., 382–85. The term *ceann* 'an Droichid' may reflect a similar English usage ('head of the bridge' *OED s. v.* head) as *cos* 'an Droichthid' in the title to the *Tiomna Nvadh* discussed below.

[12] See Ó Cuív, *Seaán Ó Cearnaigh's Irish primer*, pp. 2–3: the Marquis of Bute's copy, mentioned by Ó Cuív, is now in Trinity College, Dublin: Early Printed Books, OLSafe.

[13] The signatures (in Gaelic script) are as follows: [a]–[a4] (title to pp. 7/8); b–[b4]

recording of the watermark based on this book alone would be difficult. The main structure of what is discernible is that of a gloved hand with a flower on a short stem extending from the longest finger, within chain-lines spaced at 18–20 mm. The lower part of the watermark, where visible (b3 [number '3' visible], e3 [lower fragment of glove], [g4] [lower fragment of glove]), is unfortunately not clear enough to determine the maker's initials or any further features. We are fortunate, therefore, that a printer's trial-sheet, printed in Ussher's house, survives for this job from the same year: the celebrated 1571 Broadside, containing the first ever printing of a bardic poem composed in strict metre: a religious composition on Judgement Day by the Franciscan Pilib Bocht Ó hUiginn († 1487), which must have been considered safely and inoffensively pre-Reformation.[14]

In addition to its value as a trial-sheet for the Elizabeth type, and for questions of textual layout and textual history,[15] the Broadside is of importance in preserving a single sheet of the chancery paper on which the *Aibidil* would be printed, and then folded, cut and trimmed. The watermark consists of a gloved right hand, 85 x 25 mm, with a five-petal flower on a short stem extending from the longest finger; the number '3' is on the palm of the glove, with the letters 'A' and 'B' on either side below. The differences between this and the mark in the *Boke* are that this is a right hand, there is no *fleur de lis*, the maker's letters are in reverse order, and the mark is narrower, set between chain-lines 4 and 5 of 16, spaced at 18–20 mm. For the print-run of 200 catechisms, therefore, the unnamed printer[16] had access to a new stock of paper, possibly by the same

(pp. 9/10–15/16); c–[c4] (pp. 17/18–23/24); d–[d4] (pp. 25/26–31/32); e–[e4] (pp. 33/34–39/40); f–[f4] (pp. 41/42–47/48); g–[g4] (pp. 49/50–[55/56]). The fourth signature in each sequence is absent in all gatherings; the signature *a* is absent from the title page; pp. [55] and [56] are unnumbered. See Ó Cuív's description (*Seaán Ó Cearnaigh's Irish primer*, p. 7).

[14] Cambridge University, Parker Library, Fr. MS Box 2, item 5. My thanks to Dr Anne McLaughlin for her help in locating this item and in capturing its watermark. Printed from manuscript sources in Lambert McKenna, *Philip Bocht Ó Huiginn* (Dublin, 1931), Poem 25, and from the Broadside by Ó Cuív, *Seaán Ó Cearnaigh's Irish primer*, Appendix III. The page was put through press twice, with the same text front and back.

[15] Dealt with in detail in Ó Cuív, *Seaán Ó Cearnaigh's Irish primer*, pp. 193–98.

[16] Thought to be the author's kinsman, William Kearney (ibid., 8); E.R. Mc.C. Dix, 'William

manufacturer of the stock from which the *Boke* was made. This was probably also government issue, but other examples of it remain to be located.

The Broadside has a deeper significance. It creates a point of reference in Gaelic society for the first printed book in Gaelic type, far beyond the narrow confines of the Dublin quayside, a society where bardic compositions, religious and secular, were the highest form of literature. The poets who composed such poems were the custodians of the standard literary language, and the products of their schools were preserved in vellum manuscripts since at least the early fourteenth century, and would continue to be preserved on paper long after the bardic institution had disappeared. The Broadside poem was popular in the manuscript tradition, and the familiarity with and access to that tradition for subject-matter in a trial piece for the first outing of Gaelic type gives to the work of Seaán Ó Cearnaigh a much broader frame of reference. This is further reflected in his introduction to the Irish language in the *Aibidil* (pp. 6–10), which is largely based on bardic linguistic analysis, leading Brian Ó Cuív to suggest that Ó Cearnaigh had received training in a bardic poetry school, prior to his embarking on a Cambridge education leading to advancement in the Reformed Church.[17] This introduction is marked by his deference to the poets as experts in the language: 'oír is lé na nealádhain bheanas sin do thrachtadh go hínntleachdach éolusách: et ní leamsa'[18] (since it is to their learning, and not mine, that it falls to give a skilful and knowledgeable account of that matter).

Kearney, the second earliest known printer in Dublin', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 28C (1910), pp. 157–61; Ruairí Ó hAodha, 'The Kearneys of Connacht and the origins of Irish printing', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 67 (2015), pp. 69–99.

[17] Ó Cuív, *Seaán Ó Cearnaigh's Irish primer*, pp. 4, 13–14. In Cambridge he influenced the content of Christopher Nugent's manuscript primer of the Irish language ca. 1564: Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'Two Nugent manuscripts: The Nugent Duanaire and Queen Elizabeth's primer', *Ríocht na Midhe: Records of Meath Archaeological and Historical Society* 23 (2012), pp. 121–42, at pp. 137–38.

[18] *Aibidil*, p. 10. The idea of the poets as custodians of the written word, and experts on orthography, is reflected in the preoccupation with written (*ogham*) and spoken (*Gaoidhealg*) forms in their own writings. In his Latin-Irish catechism of 1639, Fr Theobald Stapleton laid some of the blame for general ignorance of written Irish on the poets who made Irish inaccessible through obscure language and abbreviated forms: *Catechismvs, sev doctrina Christiana, Latino-Hibernica [...] Explicata per R. D. Theobaldum Stapletonium, sacerdotem Hibernum [...]. An Teagasc criostuí,*

In addition, Ó Cearnaigh's supposed origins in Leyney, Co. Sligo[19] – one of the centres for the prominent bardic family of Ó hUiginn – might explain the choice of author and text for the trial piece.

The Broadside and the *Aibidil*, therefore, are suggestive of a cultural bridge between the old Gaelic order and some of the personnel of the new reality of aggressive colonialism. It was a bridge based on language, scholarship and book-craft, specifically that of the Gaelic manuscript and the new technology of the printed book. It would come into sharper focus twenty years later, in a project again initiated by Seaán Ó Cearnaigh, but one that he did not live to see completed.

Paper was one of the less lethal tools of conquest and colonisation, being required for increased communications from new military outposts as the conquest and the years progressed. An index to the speed with which this material proliferated in Ireland may be found in the next outing of Elizabeth's Gaelic type, that for which it was originally intended, the printing of the Irish translation of the New Testament, one of the greatest works of the Irish Renaissance and of scholarship in the Irish language, combining linguistic and manuscript scholarship with the technology of print.[20] Though a project of the Reformed Church and of a hostile Government, this book was the result of a notable collaboration between Protestant biblical scholars and some of the last representatives of the Gaelic (and Catholic) professional learned orders. One of the obvious ironies of this collaboration was that it would be the Elizabethan conquest that would bring an end to the Gaelic social order on which the traditional scholars depended to maintain their professions, to keep their schools and to make their manuscripts.

As much has been written about the production of *Tiomna Nvadh*, there is little need to rehearse all the historical details here.[21] From a codicological aspect,

iar na fhoillsuí à Ladin & à Ngaoilaig [...] Mailere Teaboid Gállduf, sagart erennach [...] (Brvxellis, 1639), [p. xi].

[19] Ó Cuív, *Seaán Ó Cearnaigh's Irish primer*, p. 3.

[20] *Tiomna Nvadh ar dTighearna agvs ar Slanaightheora Iosa Criosd, ar na tarruing gu firinneach as Gréigis gu gáoidheilg, re hUilliam O Domhnuill [...] ata so ar na chur a gclo a Mbaile athá Cliath, a dtigh mhaighistir Uilliam Uiséir Chois an Droichthid, ré Seón Francke. 1602.*

[21] Primary studies are: Bruce Dickens, 'The Irish Broadside of 1571 and Queen Elizabeth's types',

and indeed from a logistical one also, we know that the creation and printing of this book was a two-phase project. This is hinted at in the lengthy 'epistle dedicatorie', which Bishop William Daniel (Uilliam Ó Domhnuill) – who brought the translation to completion – addressed to James I, and which is full of the vitriol of Reformation rhetoric. It is in the Irish-language address to the reader ('do chum an leughthora') – a comparatively mild document[22] – that follows it, however, that we get a more precise picture of the arrangements and of the personnel involved, including an acknowledgement of the help received from the Irish scholars, a detail tellingly omitted from the English-language 'epistle':

> Obair [...] nách tugadh do chum críche gus anois. Biódh gu bhfuáradar dáoine diágha, foirfe, foghlomtha lór sáothair dhá táobh roimhe so: mar atá Séan O Cearnuidh, do bhí na threisenéir a dteampall Phádruic a mbaile atha Cliáth, *agus* Nicolás Bhailis do bhí na Easbog ró oírrdheirc a Nosruidhe, maille ré Fearganainm ó Ndomhnalláin atá anois na Áirdeasbog a Dtuaim, noch dho ghabh sáothar mór air féin maille riómsa *agus* ré Máoilín óg mhac Bhruáideadha, duine iúlmhar sa teanguidh ghaoidheilge,

Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society 1 (1949), pp. 48–60; E.R. McC. Dix, *Printing in Dublin prior to 1601* (2nd ed., Dublin, 1932); E.R. McC. Dix, 'William Kearney'; T.H. Darlow & H.F. Moule, *Historical catalogue of the printed editions of Holy Scripture* I–II (London, 1903–1911), II, pp. 790–91; Nicholas Williams, *I bprionta i leabhar: Na Protastúin agus prós na Gaeilge 1567–1724* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1986), pp. 27–42; Fearghus Ó Fearghail, *The Irish Testament of 1602*, Bedell Boyle Lecture 2003 (Dublin, 2004); Fearghus Ó Fearghail, 'The Irish New Testament of 1602 in its European context', *Procceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 31 (2008), pp. 77–107; Fearghus Ó Fearghail, '"A work which generations had hoped for": The first translation into Irish of the New Testament', *'Wading lambs and swimming elephants': The Bible for the laity and theologians in the late medieval and early modern era*, ed. Wim François & August den Hollander (Leuven, 2012), pp. 347–86; Fearghus Ó Fearghail, 'A survey of the extant copies of the Irish New Testament of 1602', *Ossory, Laois and Leinster* 7 (2019), pp. 51–73: this paper identifies 39 surviving copies of the *Tiomna Nvadh*; since publication two further copies have come to light, one that has now been donated to NUI Galway (James Hardiman Library, Special Collections, 225.59162 BIB), and the second in the Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, in the Friedenstein Palace, Germany (information from Marie Boran and Fearghus Ó Fearghail).

[22] The 'dichotomy of approach' between the epistle and the address to the reader has been noted in Marc Caball, 'Gaelic and Protestant: A case study in early modern self-fashioning, 1567–1608', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 110 (2010), pp. 191–215, at p. 211.

> sa Gcoláisde nuádh láimh ré Baile atha Cliáth, áit nar chriochnuighemar maille re na chur a gcló ghaoidheilge, (ar chosdus Chóigidh Chonnachd, ré linn Shior Risdeard Bingeam do bheith na uachdarán innte,) gus an seiseadh caibidil do thsoisgéul Lucais, *agus* an chuid eile dhon tsoisgéul sin, *agus* soisgéul Eóin, sgríobhtha ré láimh gan chur a gcló an tan sin, ná fós gu ceann cúig mbliádhan na dhiáigh, nó gu dtáinic dhíomsa tré thoil Dé, maille ré cungnamh Domhnuill óig Iuiginn, (air ar chuir mé uálach na coda eile dho sgríobhadh do réir oghuim *agus* chirt na ghaoidheilge,) críoch dho chur uirrthe, ar chosdus mhaighisdir Uilliam Uiseir, Cléireach na comhairle [...].[23]
>
> ([...] a work [...] that was not completed until now, though devout, accomplished, learned people experienced much labour on account of it before now: namely Seán Ó Cearnuidh, who was treasurer in St. Patrick's Church in Dublin, and Nicholas Walsh, who was a renowned bishop in Ossory, together with Fear Gan Ainm Ó Domhnalláin, who is now Archbishop in Tuam, who took great labour upon himself, together with myself and Maoilín Óg Mac Bruaideadha, a person knowledgeable in the Irish language, in the new College beside Dublin, where we completed and printed in Irish (at the expense of the Province of Connacht, while Sir Richard Bingham was President there) up to the sixth chapter of Luke's gospel, the rest of that gospel and John's gospel being in manuscript [but] not printed at that time nor until five years afterwards when, through God's will, with the help of Domhnall Óg Ó hUiginn (on whom I laid the burden of writing the rest according to the orthography and propriety of Irish), I succeeded in finishing it, at the expense of Mr William Ussher, Clerk of the Council [...].)

The first phase was conducted under the sponsorship of Richard Bingham, President of Connacht (1584–1597). That some of the personnel named were dead long before the beginning of the printing of that phase of the work, the first printing-job to be done outside the city walls, in 'your Maiesties colledge lately erected neare Dublin' – Trinity College, founded 1592 – shows how long a gestation this great work had.[24]

[23] *Tiomna Nvadh*, f. [3]v5–20 [first foliation].

[24] Kearney disappears from the record soon after the printing of the *Aibidil*, and may have fallen victim to the plague of 1575 that killed one third of Dublin's population (J. F. D. Shrewsbury,

Other than the statement in the 'Epistle' to the effect that 'al hope of proceeding was in a maner cut off by reason of the generall garboiles, and universal floud of rebellion that overflowed the face of the Kingdome', we do not know the particulars as to why that phase broke off at the end of Luke 5.[25] The documented dispute between Trinity College and the printer William Kearney may have also contributed to the situation. Though the five-year period mentioned would give 1597 as the date for the termination, the removal from the college by Kearney of his 'owne English press, with all the fitt furniture thereof'[26] to Christchurch, the 'Cathedrall Church of the Blessed Trinitie Dublin', where on 12 June 1595 he printed the only surviving job of his Dublin career bearing his name (*Proclamation against the Earl of Tyrone and his adherents in Ulster*),[27] must be a *terminus ante quem* for the completion of the first phase, in addition to illustrating the mobility of the printing equipment.[28]

Daniel tells us that the second phase took place five years later, under the sponsorship of William Ussher, Clerk of the Irish Council, whose father John had sponsored the printing of the *Aibidil* in 1571. From the title page of the finished work we learn that the printing took place in his house in 1602, carried out by Seón Francke:[29] 'a dtigh mhaighistir Uilliam Uiséir Chois an Droichthid'

A history of bubonic plague in the British Isles (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 211–12; Joseph Brady & Anngret Simms, *Dublin through space and time (c. 900–1900)* (Dublin, 2001), p. 63; Alan J. Fletcher, 'The *Liber Albus* of Christ Church cathedral, Dublin', *The medieval manuscripts of Christ Church Cathedral Dublin*, ed. Raymond Gillespie & Raymond Refaussé (Dublin, 2006), pp. 129–62, at p. 136). Bishop Walsh was killed in Kilkenny in 1585.

[25] Ó Fearghail, 'European context', p. 86; Ó hAodha, 'The Kearneys of Connacht', p. 71.

[26] Mary Pollard, *A dictionary of members of the Dublin book trade 1550–1800* (London, 2000), p. 331.

[27] Dix, 'William Kearney'; Dix, *Printing in Dublin*, p. 12. For imprints made by him during his London career see Ó hAodha, 'The Kearneys of Connacht'.

[28] The press used for the *Tiomna Nvadh* would not have differed greatly from that depicted in the famous woodcuts of Abraham von Werdt, or illustrated in Philip Gaskell, *A new introduction to bibliography* (Oxford, 1972), p. 119.

[29] Alias John Franckton, for whom see Pollard, *Dictionary*, pp. 225–27. Franckton's next work in Irish was printed in his own premises (location not given, but probably Castle Street (Pollard, *Dictionary*, p. 225)), Daniel's translation of the Book of Common Prayer: *Leabhar na nvrnaightheadh gcomhchoidchiond agvs mheinisdraldachda na Sacrameinteadh, maille le gnathaighthibh agus le hordaighthibh oile, do réir eagailse na Sagsan. Ata so ar na chur a gclo a Mbaile athá Cliath, a*

(in the house of Mr William Ussher [at the] bridgefoot).[30] Whether or not this refers again to the Tower above the bridge, it brings us once more to the western end of Merchant's Quay.

What had been completed in Trinity College of the printing of the *Tiomna Nvadh* in the first phase amounted to ff. 1–52 of what would eventually be 214 folios, excluding the preliminary pages. The paper in those first 52 folios came from two different moulds: one had a watermark (64 × 21 mm) of a one-handled pot/jug, capped with a trefoil over a crown; the second had a similar (46 × 21 mm) one-handled pot/jug with a spray of three trefoils springing from the top of the handle, and the letters 'P O' in the bowl. The latter can be identified as being from the factory of Pierre Ollivier of Pont-Authou in Normandy, paper from which is also preserved in official documents from the English administration in Munster, 1600.[31] From Luke 6 onwards, these two watermarks are still found for another forty folios, after which different watermarks appear, one of the dominant ones being a trefoil over a sphere over a heart, with the letter 'F' on the left and 'L' on the right. The owner of these initials has not been identified,[32] but the watermark is also found in two books published in La Rochelle in 1600, suggesting a provenance in south-western France for this paper.[33] The watermark evidence shows that when the apparatus

dtigh Shéon Francke alias *Franckton, Prionntóir an Ríogh an Eirinn. 1608*; a folio book, with its rubrication it represents the first example of colour printing in Irish.

[30] This could also be translated 'beside the Bridge', but is more likely to be a calque on the English compound, meaning '(one) end of a bridge'.

[31] Folger Shakespeare Library, Henry Sheffield Papers: Thomas L. Gravell Watermark Archive, nos FOL0539, FOL0944.

[32] Similarly initialled marks appear in the Bagot Papers (Folger Shakespeare Library) dated 1589: Thomas L. Gravell Watermark Archive, nos FOL0249, FOL0359, FOL0673 and FOL0072.

[33] *Chronologicarum demonstrationum libri tres Joannis Temporarii* (Rupellae: ex officina Hieronymi Haultini 1600); *Vérification des lieux impvgnez de faux, tant en la préface qu'aux livres de l'Institution de la Saincte Eucharistie de nostre Seigneur [...] par Messire Phillippes de Mornai [...]* (A La Rochelle par Hierosme Havltin M.DC); see Ó Macháin, 'Gaelic paper manuscript', p. 38. Muriel Hoareau, of the Médiathèque Michel-Crépeau, La Rochelle, who discovered the correspondence between the watermarks, informs me that such marks centred on a sphere were a feature of quality paper 'à la sphere' that was made in the Angoulême region and exported from La Rochelle.

of the only letterpress in Ireland moved to Ussher's house, part of the original stock of paper went with it, along with a new and more eclectic supply.

Twelve watermarks have been observed to date in the copies of the *Tiomna Nvadh* examined for this study, only two of which occur in the paper (excluding the preliminaries) before Luke 6, with no sign of the older stocks of paper that were used in the printing of the *Boke of the common praier* and the *Aibidil*. The preliminaries contain two marks: a bunch of grapes and a trefoil above a circle containing the letter 'L' with a heart beneath; this latter mark is found elsewhere in the book. This eclectic paper stock is, perhaps, to be expected from a book with such a fragmented history and a print-run of 500, but it is a situation that was to be replicated six years later in the printing of Daniel's translation of the Book of Common Prayer (n. 29 above), discussion of which must await another occasion. Despite elements of continuity in the project, the *Tiomna Nvadh* can also be seen as representing a break from the first wave of printing in Dublin, and as symbolising the beginnings of the proliferation of paper in Ireland.

If ff. 1–214 are eloquent with regard to the history of the making of this great book, the preliminary pages also have a tale to tell. The collation of the *Tiomna Nvadh* is: i^4 + ii^1 + *iii–cix*^{2}, a folio volume, each section comprising a single sheet printed 1 and 4, 2 and 3, and gathered in twos. There are two aberrations in the preliminary material, the first being the singleton that constitutes the title to Matthew, which has been noted elsewhere.[34] The second is gathering *i*, the only gathering of four in the book. The first conjugate pair (i.e. 1 and 4) are the title page with its verso blank, and the address to the reader, with its recto blank; in other words, one side of the sheet was printed, and the other left blank. This means that the outer bifolium of the first gathering serves in effect as a wrapper for the inner bifolium (ff. 1–2, first foliation), which contains 'The epistle dedicatorie', the contents of which were the subject of some uncertainty as the death of Elizabeth in March 1602/03 followed close on the visit to London by Bishop Daniel with the *Tiomna Nvadh* in February of that year. While there were two printings of the 'Epistle', in Dublin (Francton) and London (Richard

[34] Darlow & Moule, *Historical catalogue* II, p. 791.

Field),[35] no example survives of one containing a dedication to Elizabeth. Yet the design of the preliminary pages allowed for the insertion of a royal dedication while retaining the secondary position of the Irish address to the reader. In this way, the collation of this opening section of the work is a tangible reflection of the political uncertainty at the point in time that the last sheets left the printing press.

Despite all that has been written about the *Tiomna Nvadh*, we are only at the beginning of understanding its archaeology, a study that is vital if we wish to form a picture of what confronted both Protestant churchmen and Gaelic scholars in Trinity College and later in Ussher's house. In this, there can be no doubt that a study of the paper has an important part to play – a collation of the watermarks in all surviving copies would be very instructive. Even a non-invasive examination of the five copies consulted for this study showed that in the case of two, the break between Luke 5 and Luke 6 had repercussions for the state in which the book survives today. The Trinity College Dublin copy shows uniform discoloration of f. 53r (the page where Luke 6 begins), indicating some time spent independent of the first portion of the book prior to unification through binding. One of the two National Library of Ireland copies, LO 1208, lost the two final bifolia (ff. 49/50 and 51/52) of the early section of the work, which, on unification with the latter section, meant that the text of the missing portion (Luke 2:15 [part]–5:39) had to be supplied in manuscript, an interesting phenomenon in itself, illustrative of the enduring post-print value of the hand-written word in Irish tradition. Both these cases suggest some sort of independent circulation of the two parts, or perhaps the 'release' of the first part before the printing of the second was effected. This is further supported by the existence in Lambeth Palace Library of the early part (ff. 1–52) devoid of both prelims and later section.[36]

The juncture of manuscript and print in LO 1208 is a reminder that further research should also include a re-examination of the respective roles of the scholars and manuscript men who were involved in this great project, which

[35] Five copies of the London printing survive: Ó Fearghail, 'A survey of the extant copies', pp. 61–62.

[36] Ó Fearghail, 'A survey of the extant copies', pp. 72–73.

is so symbolic of the encounter between the two traditions at this crucial time in Irish history. It is especially worth considering the involvement of the two Gaelic scholars, both poets, in the respective phases of the production of the *Tiomna Nvadh*. Of the two poets mentioned, Maoilín Óg Mac Bruaideadha was the more renowned. His death on the last day of December 1602, the year in which the printing of the *Tiomna Nvadh* was completed, earned for him a significant tribute in the record of his death in the *Annals of the Four Masters*.[37] There he is given the accolade not just of master of his own profession of chronicler, but also that of master of poetry, the annalist adding an indicative list of his poems by way of illustration. His family attachment was to the earls of Thomond: the fourth earl (1581–1624), Donnchadh Ó Briain, an English-educated Protestant and a strong ally of the Crown, may have been instrumental in the poet's introduction to the *Tiomna Nvadh* project.

As to the identity of Maoilín Óg's successor in the project, Domhnall Óg Ó hUiginn, the probability is that he is to be equated with the poet – Domhnall Óg mac Aodha meic Dhomhnaill Chaim Í Uiginn – whose work is preserved in the Ó hEadhra *duanaire* (manuscript poetry-anthology) compiled for Cormac Ó hEadhra († 1612) of Leyney, Co. Sligo. His three bardic poems in that collection[38] provide ample evidence of work that accorded with the 'orthography and propriety of Irish', skills which were required of him by Bishop Daniel. In extent, his work on the *Tiomna Nvadh* must have comprised at least half the book as printed: ff. 98–214, the Acts, the Epistles and Revelation. One imagines that he may also have had some involvement in proofing what had been left unprinted of Luke, and all of John. The Leyney connection is a further circumstantial connection with Seaán Ó Cearnaigh. By this time that area had been subject to all the administrative trappings of English shiring, to the

[37] *Annala Rioghachta Eireann*: *The annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters* I–VII, ed. John O'Donovan (Dublin, 1848–1851), VI, p. 2320.

[38] *The book of O'Hara: Leabhar Í Eadhra*, ed. Lambert McKenna (Dublin, 1951), Poems XVI, XXXIV, XXXV; a poem addressed to Fiachaidh mac Aodha († 1597) in the O'Byrne *duanaire* by a 'Domhnall Ó hUiginn' may be also by our author (*Leabhar Branach: The book of the O'Byrnes*, ed. Seán Mac Airt (Dublin, 1944), Poem 32), but one should also note the existence of a contemporary poet Domhnall mac Tomáis Í Uiginn who features as an author (ca. 1567) in the O'Gara collection (RIA MS 23 F 16, pp. 80–82).

consternation of Domhnall's kinsman, the master poet Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn.[39] Two of Domhnall's three poems in the anthology are addressed to Tadhg (son of Cormac) Ó hEadhra († 1616), who in 1608 held the office of High-Sherriff of Sligo.[40] It may have been through some such connections with local administration that Domhnall came to the attention of Bishop Daniel.

Adding to the Gaelic manuscript scholarship that implicitly underlies the creation of the Gaelic fount and the production of the Broadside and of the *Aibidil Gaoidheilge & Caiticiosma* in 1571, in the *Tiomna Nvadh* we have a record of the involvement of Gaelic scholar-scribes in book production through print, and with the act of printing itself. It is a fascinating encounter to contemplate, and one not devoid of irony. When we look at the *Tiomna Nvadh* with an eye to the contrast between it and the type of books with which these scholars were familiar, it adds to our appreciation of this metaphor for a moment of interaction between the old order and the new order, in a socio-political sense as well as a bibliographical one. This is underlined when we recollect that the poetry composed by the two poets in question was, *mutatis mutandis*, staunchly traditional in style and content. Domhnall Óg, for instance, in one of his two poems to Tadhg Buidhe, High-Sherriff of Sligo, portrays him as the rightful ruler of Ireland, a bloody warrior and conqueror of the English (*Danair*).[41] The corpus of Maoilín Óg's work is more extensive, and shows him composing a variety of poems, especially poems with strong genealogical content, as would be expected from a prominent representative of a renowned family of historians.

There is a further aspect to Maoilín Óg's poetry, however, that reflects a decline in fortunes towards the end of his life – following his involvement in the *Tiomna Nvadh* project, in other words. Two poems survive by him that address this theme. One laments the disappearance of the schools of learning, and the futility of seeking patronage – even in his own native Thomond – after the

[39] Eleanor Knott, *The bardic poems of Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn (1550–1591)* I–II (London 1922–1926), Poem 22. The first line of one of Domhanll Óg's poems (XXXV: 'A Thaidhg cuimhnigh an comann') is a deliberate echo of a poem by Tadhg Dall, 'A Mhór cuimhnigh an comann' (Knott, *Tadhg Dall*, Poem 15).

[40] McKenna, *The book of O'Hara*, p. xxvi. This position was also said to have been occupied by Tadhg Dall's son, Tadhg Óg (Knott, *Tadhg Dall* II, p. 322).

[41] McKenna, *Book of O'Hara*, Poem XXXIV, quatrains 6, 11, 29.

over-running of the country by the English.[42] The second refers specifically to Maoilín Óg's own reduction in circumstances, which he makes clear is the result of loss of patronage of the unnamed chief of the Í Bhriain, to whom Maoilín Óg's family were attached as hereditary historians. In revenge for this loss, the poet says that his stratagem will be to inform on his patron (to the English, we are to understand), telling them that Ó Briain persists in the practice of the Gaelic ways outlawed by them. In addition to listening to recitations of poetry, this practice includes aspects of Catholicism especially reviled by the Reformed Church: worshiping images and visiting holy wells.[43] The threat is very much a form of praise by antiphrasis, and taken with his other work, and that of Domhnall Óg Ó hUiginn, heightens the tension of the involvement of both poets in the English- and Reformation-driven enterprise that was the translation and printing of the *Tiomna Nvadh*.

Manuscript culture

The involvement of Mac Bruaideadha and Ó hUiginn in the production of this *magnum opus* of early-modern Ireland is a small but fascinating juncture-point in Irish literature and culture. Assuming that both had journeyed to Dublin at some time during the respective periods in which the *Tiomna Nvadh* was being printed, their interaction with the very machinery of book production can only be imagined as a dramatic moment. The books to which the two poets were accustomed were the manuscript works of learning that had their origins in pre-Norman monastic culture in Ireland, and that had evolved into the scholarly anthologies of the four branches of native learning in the late-medieval period: poetry, history (*seanchas*), law and medicine. In appearance, writing and layout, these hand-written books retained conservative traces of their early scholastic origins that were still common in European practice; for example, dry-point and ink ruling, rubrication, columnar layout and a system of abbreviations some

[42] Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'Maoilín Óg Mac Bruaideadha and the decline of patronage', *Celtica* 32 (2020), pp. 217–35.

[43] Tomás Ó Rathile, *Measgra Dánta: Miscellaneous Irish poems* I–II (Cork, 1927), Poem 26 lines 53–56; discussed in Ó Macháin, 'Maoilín Óg'.

of which were of Tironian origin. The manuscripts were generally gathered in eights and tens, in contrast to the folio collation of the *Tiomna Nvadh*. The reaction of the native manuscript scholars to being confronted with the new culture of book-craft can only be imagined.

Despite this conservatism, and the continuity of medieval traditions of vellum manuscript production down to and during the period of the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland, glimpses are afforded us from time to time of Renaissance influence on the Irish hand-made book, betokening a comparable cultural juncture as that in evidence in the production of the *Tiomna Nvadh*. This is only to be expected given the coexistence of parallel manuscript traditions in late-medieval Ireland: the Gaelic scholarly tradition, and the continental tradition practised in municipal centres and in the friaries and abbeys of the new religious orders.[44] The existence in such locations of collections of books, and of private libraries among the Norman-Irish – of which little is known – must have enhanced the potential for intercultural contact in book-craft. The manuscripts and printed books in Latin, French and English that were to be found alongside Gaelic manuscripts in the library of the Earl of Kildare might be indicative of this point.[45]

Just as European intellectual influence had always been a feature of Irish learning in medieval times, intercultural contact and influence is in evidence at levels of content and codicology in Irish manuscripts during the Renaissance period. The most overt locus for this is the work of the medical scholars, who in their access to and familiarity with European scientific writings, and the scholarship they displayed in rendering them in Irish, as much as in their early and pioneering engagement with paper,[46] represent Renaissance innovation at its best. It is not just in their engagement with the works of Bernard of Gordon and other scientific writers that the Irish medical scholars were innovatory. In

[44] Ó Macháin, 'Gaelic paper manuscript', 21.

[45] Aisling Byrne, 'The Earls of Kildare and their books at the end of the Middle Ages', *The library*, 7th Series, 14/2 (June, 2013), pp. 129–53; Diarmaid Ó Catháin, 'Some reflexes of Latin learning and of the Renaissance in Ireland, c. 1450–c. 1600', *Making Ireland Roman: Irish neo-Latin writers and the republic of letters*, ed. Jason Harris & Keith C. Sidwell (Cork, 2009), pp. 14–35.

[46] Ó Macháin, 'Gaelic paper manuscript', pp. 24–27.

layout even the plainest of paper medical books display signs of their relation to the printed word in the form of running titles and other features. Evidence of scholarly innovation and intercultural contact is not confined to the medical books, however. In the matter of content, *seanchas* ('history') manuscripts – the Book of Lismore (ca. 1480) for instance – continue the long-established practice of displaying a mixture of native material and continental literature in translation, bearing witness to widespread commerce in texts, books and ideas in the late-medieval period.

Beyond glimpses of features such as those just mentioned, and the abundant textual evidence for interaction with cultures outside the Gaelic world, there was limited scope for sustained innovation in traditional manuscript-design. One area, however, that of manuscript decoration, is more revealing than others. An outstanding example occurs in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B 514. This vellum manuscript contains two interrelated sections written by the same scribe, and the only example of a signed piece of art that I am aware of in Gaelic vernacular manuscripts. The first section of the manuscript is the life of Colum Cille assembled by Maghnus Ó Domhnaill and completed from many sources in 1532, five years before he succeeded his father as chief of Tír Conaill (Co. Donegal). Ó Domhnaill is a larger-than-life figure in Gaelic Ireland of the sixteenth century, and this manuscript is but one of his legacies to Irish letters.[47] The Life of Colum Cille was a work of scholarship on a scale comparable to the work of the translators of the *Tiomna Nvadh* a half-century later: the introduction to the work tells us that Maghnus had a Latin life translated into Irish, and an Old Irish life reformulated into contemporary Irish, prior to personally collating this with elements of the saint's life that were scattered throughout other manuscripts, and then consolidating everything into a single text.[48] His work, he tells us, was informed by the necessity for such a life

[47] Brendan Bradshaw, 'Manus "the magnificent": O'Donnell as renaissance prince', *Studies in Irish history presented to R. Dudley Edwards*, ed. Art Cosgrove & Donal McCartney (Dublin, 1979), pp. 15–37; Jan Erik Rekdal, 'Maghnus Ó Domhnaill's role as poet and its dialogical implications', *Proceedings of the seventh symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica*, ed. Mícheál Ó Flaithearta (Uppsala, 2007), pp. 111–18.

[48] *Betha Colaim Chille: Life of Columcille compiled by Manus O'Donnell in 1532*, ed. A. O'Kelleher & G. Schoepperle (Urbana, IL, 1918), 4.32–6, 6.9–17.

following the great loss of manuscripts during the Viking invasions, and by the status of his own kinsman and beloved patron saint,[49] Colum Cille, as primate ('prímhfháidh nimhe agus talmhan') of the saints of Ireland.

The second section of the manuscript consists of an anthology of fifty poems concerning Tír Conaill and the Ó Domhnaill lordship. These poems consist firstly of pre-bardic material largely containing historical knowledge relevant to the origins of the Í Dhomhnaill; followed secondly by bardic poetry featuring an important collection of the work of Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe, the thirteenth-century master poet, along with poems of later date, three of which are addressed to Maghnus himself. The manuscript is unsigned, but the scribe of both parts has been identified as Giolla Riabhach (Mór) Ó Cléirigh, of the great family of historians attached to the Í Dhomhnaill.[50] The manuscript is also undated, but it must be at least later than 1532, and possibly later than 1537.

Through the newly assembled Life of Colum Cille, followed by an anthology of Ó Domhnaill poems, Rawlinson B 514 sets forth the Ó Domhnaill claim to superior status in sixteenth-century Gaelic Ireland. As if to emphasise this, the Rawlinson manuscript also has a pictorial element in the form of the remarkable feature of the frontispiece (f. iii^{v}) depicting Colum Cille as a contemporary abbot.[51] Timothy O'Neill has suggested that this may be an example of an owner-portrait – Maghnus Ó Domhnaill as Colum Cille – of a type common in European tradition.[52]

The frontispiece is one of those features inherited from the manuscript tradition by the printed book from which it later, as here, re-enters the manuscript tradition. It is a rarity in Irish pre-conquest manuscripts, and where it occurs

[49] 'réna combrathair genelaig agus réna patrun gradhach fen' (*Betha Colaim Chille,* 6.18–19).

[50] Brian Ó Cuív, *Catalogue of Irish language manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College libraries* I–II (Dublin, 2001–2003), I, pp. 261–74.

[51] Discussion in F. Henry & G. Marsh-Micheli, 'Manuscripts and illumination 1169–1603', *Medieval Ireland 1169–1534*, ed. Art Cosgrove, New History of Ireland II (Oxford, 1987), pp. 781–815, at pp. 807–09.

[52] In a personal communication, offering as a contemporary example from portraiture that of Albrecht von Brandenburg Archbishop of Mainz and Magdeburg 1513–1545, who is portrayed as St. Erasmus by Matthias Grünewald in the panel painting 'The saints Erasmus and Mauritius' (Alte Pinakothek, Munich). For a general view of owner portraits see Alexa Sand, *Vision, devotion, and self-representation in late medieval art* (New York, 2014).

it is always worthy of notice.[53] Unlike the few other examples from the Irish vellum tradition, there can be no doubt as to the integrity of the Colum Cille leaf (f. iii) in the structure of the book, as it is the first of a gathering of eight.[54] The page measures 41.5 × 28.5 cm and it is filled with colour: black, red, blue, green and gold. The mitred Colum Cille is depicted in full episcopal costume, a crozier in his left hand, his right hand raised in benediction, his face gazing towards the facing opening page of his biography. His figure is framed by an archway or canopy of acanthus leaves alternately swirling left and right from a central vine that meanders from both ends and intertwines at the top. The very top of the canopy has been skimmed off in cropping, but otherwise the picture is intact and well preserved.

In inspiration the portrait draws on a combination of traditional and Renaissance art. For example, while the elaborate decoration of acanthus leaves on the canopy is a direct borrowing from European and English tradition,[55] the arched framing device might have been suggested by sources as commonplace as late-medieval effigial representations,[56] particularly on tomb-surrounds, where the canopy is practically a standard decorative framing device.[57] This device seems to have been particularly associated with representations of Colum Cille, as two further instances of it occur in earlier medieval art. That on the final page of St. Gallen MS 655, a ninth-century copy of the Vita Columbae, is a mere sketch of the saint in simple vestments with both arms raised, standing under an arch erected on pillars; as this book was created in St. Gallen it is unlikely to have been known to the Rawlinson artist.[58] That on the front of the eleventh-century reliquary (*cumhdach*) which once housed Colum Cille's manuscript, the

[53] Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'The Book of Ballymote and the Irish book', *Book of Ballymote*, ed. Ruairí Ó hUiginn (Dublin, 2018), pp. 221–50 at pp. 237–39.

[54] Collation given in Ó Cuív, *Catalogue* I, p. 261.

[55] Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'Notes on the decoration in the *duanaire* of Cú Chonnacht Mág Uidhir', *Éigse* 39 (2016), pp. 111–27, at pp. 117–18.

[56] John Hunt, *Irish medieval figure sculpture 1200–1600* I–II (Dublin/London, 1974), Plates 65, 75, 88, etc.

[57] Hunt, *Irish medieval figure sculpture,* where there are many illustrations, e.g. plates 194–99, 220, 254, 304, 337.

[58] I thank Prof. Tim O'Neill for drawing my attention to this picture.

Cathach (RIA MS 12 R 33), should have been well known to him, however. Here, under the first of a triptych of arches, we have the figure of a mitred abbot, wearing chasuble and alb, an inward-facing crozier in his left hand, his right hand raised in benediction.[59] While the v-shaped folds of the chasuble on the reliquary, and the fluted alb, bear a certain similarity to the representation of those items in the manuscript drawing, the influence is of a more general nature. This reliquary would have been accessible to the makers of the manuscript, and its influence can be further detected in the geometric stairs-pattern, like incomplete Greek keys, that fills the inner and outer frame of the canopy in the manuscript, examples of which are located on the left-hand verge of the obverse side of the *cumhdach*. In the manuscript, these patterns are outlined in black, and the spaces between them coloured in dark blue. The same pattern is repeated in green on the hem and in black on the collar of the abbot's chasuble.

The figure of Colum Cille is of course the focus of the picture. It is set on a background of quatrefoils located in red-outlined square lozenges. The saint is represented in full episcopal regalia, which, from the top down, may be itemised as mitre, almuce, stole, chasuble over a dalmatic over a flowing alb (which extends to the ground); the left hand holds an inward-turned crozier with pointed base; the left wrist wears a maniple; the right hand is extended in benediction. Little more than the hood of the almuce is visible, fastened above the collar of the chasuble and extending high behind the saint's neck.[60] It has a thick border, outlined in black and coloured in red. The hood bears a square wove pattern, coloured green; the fur lining is indicated with black hachuring.

The chasuble is coloured a deep blue, with thick black lines probably representing folds. On the collar rests the clasp of the almuce. The lining of the chasuble, where revealed, bears light red hachuring. The Y-orphrey[61] on the chasuble has a thick red border framing sequences of miniature downward-

[59] See illustration in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, 'The *Cathach* and *Domhnach Airgid*', *Treasures of the Royal Irish Academy Library*, ed. Bernadette Cunningham & Siobhán Fitzpatrick (Dublin, 2009), pp. 1–9, at p. 2.

[60] For a discussion of medieval Irish vestments see *Art and architecture of Ireland, volume 1: Medieval c. 400–c. 1600*, ed. Andrew Carpenter & Rachel Moss (Dublin, 2015), pp. 401–07.

[61] See R.A.S. Macalister, *Ecclesiastical vestments: Their development and history* (London, 1896), pp. 88–89.

Figure 2: Frontispiece to Beatha Choluim Chille (Rawlinson B 514, f. iii^{v}).
Photo: Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

pointing acanthus leaves, outlined in black and turned alternately left and right from a central vine; the vertical orphrey terminates below with an upward-pointing acanthus resting on a black band above a row of red wavy lines; these wavy lines are reprised in black on the blue maniple. Beneath the chasuble can be seen a red-coloured, fluted dalmatic with a black-dotted fringe and a black-hachured lining. Emerging from under the dalmatic are the two ends of the stole coloured blue with three red tassels suspended from both. These rest above the point where the abbot's black shoes are drawn, turned sideways: perhaps the least impressive feature of the work.

The figurative and opulent characteristics of the drawing become more pronounced when we examine the figure above the shoulders. The crozier, with black, pointed butt, and red spiralling shaft, terminates in a dog-headed crook at head-height to the abbot. Emphasising the manuscript context – where sprays of vegetation emerging from human or animal mouths can be seen in manuscript decoration from the ninth century onwards[62] – and the figurative element of this part of the drawing, two blue leaves emerge from the mouth of the dog-head. The smaller is an acanthus leaf that hangs down for the length of the mount towards the saint's hand; the larger one is an oak leaf – a possible reference to Derry/Doire[63] – that fills the crook of the crozier.

Amidst this wonderful array of colour and decoration our attention is drawn to the saint's face, specifically to his beard, which is made from gold-leaf, a rare occurrence of this material and of true illumination in the Gaelic manuscript tradition.[64] The gold leaf is also used in the saint's hair and in the seams of the mitre. The edges of the mitre are decorated with trumpet flowers and both peaks terminate in a large trumpet flower. The entire mitre is framed in blue inside a black outline.

The unique illumination of the beard, hair and mitre is the high point of the colour in this drawing, and further innovations are visible as figurative high points on either side of the mitred head. At the saint's right ear, and to his left, just above the crook of the crozier, are two well-executed Tudor roses,

[62] Ó Macháin, 'Notes on the decoration in the *duanaire* of Cú Chonnacht Mág Uidhir', p. 117.
[63] Pointed out to me by Tim O'Neill.
[64] My thanks again to Tim O'Neill for discussing this with me.

the first and only appearance of this image in a Gaelic manuscript.[65] Darren Mac Eiteagáin has mentioned this feature of the frontispiece in his work on Renaissance Tír Conaill, seeing it as further evidence of the ready assimilation of external influence.[66] More interesting still is that sprouting from both roses is a *fleur de lis*: that on the saint's right is coloured green, that on his left is coloured red. This symbolism could be debated,[67] but one cannot but think that Tudor claims to France and Ireland are here being acknowledged, and that these symbols, surrounding the golden face and mitre of Colum Cille constitute an iconography of appeasement, if not indeed of submission. The collocation of *fleurs de lis* and Tudor roses is well documented in art, heraldry, architecture and elsewhere.[68] The use of green to signify Ireland – if that is what is intended – is the first appearance in art of the colour with this symbolism, though well-established in literature.[69]

These symbols that frame the saint's head are no afterthought or later addition. They occupy the space that was allotted them by the artist. If Rawlinson B 514 is a portfolio of Ó Domhnaill identity, then this frontispiece is one of the most eloquent items in that portfolio, making an impression entirely in keeping with that made by Maghnus Ó Domhnaill himself on the celebrated occasion of his meeting with St. Leger, the Lord Deputy, in 1541, when he wore a cloak of crimson satin over a coat of crimson velvet, and a feathered bonnet of black velvet, all three items adorned with aglets of gold.[70] It may have

[65] Not counting the decorative device embroidered on the parchment wrapper of 'Elizabeth's primer'.

[66] Darren Mac Eiteagáin, 'The Renaissance and the late medieval lordship of Tír Chonaill, 1461–1555', *Donegal history and society: Interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county*, ed. William Nolan, Liam Ronayne & Máiréad Dunleavy (Dublin, 1995), pp. 203–28, at p. 217.

[67] Karen Ralph, for example, suggests a connection with symbols of Gaelic kingship ('A manuscript for a Lord: Reading the illumination in the Book of Ballymote', *Book of Ballymote*, ed. Ó hUiginn, pp. 301–41, at pp. 330–31, Colum Cille portrait discussed pp. 338–40).

[68] For example, Paul Gwynne, 'The frontispiece to an illuminated panegyric of Henry VII: A note on the sources', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 55 (1992), pp. 266–70.

[69] Brian Ó Cuív, 'The wearing of the green', *Studia Hibernica* 17–18 (1977–1978), pp. 107–19.

[70] Mac Eiteagáin, 'Renaissance', p. 220; Hiram Morgan, 'The end of Gaelic Ulster: A thematic interpretation of events between 1534 and 1610', *Irish historical studies* 26/101 (May, 1988), pp. 8–32, at p. 24.

been with some such occasion in mind – when so overt a display of identity and intent as is visible in the frontispiece would have been significant – that the heraldic or political symbols were included in the Colum Cille portrait, rendering it an eloquent expression of the understanding of the power of the book in intercultural contact in Gaelic Ireland.

The final question that arises is to whom this extraordinary work may be attributed. Apart from rare instances where the scribe tells us himself that he is responsible for the decorated lettering, as does Giolla Íosa Mór Mac Fhirbhisigh in the Book of Lecan (RIA MS 23 P 2, f. 162v), named illustrators are non-existent in Gaelic manuscript tradition. Given the artistry and colour involved in the Colum Cille portrait, however, and the other unique points about this frontispiece, we can be grateful that the artist has signed his name:

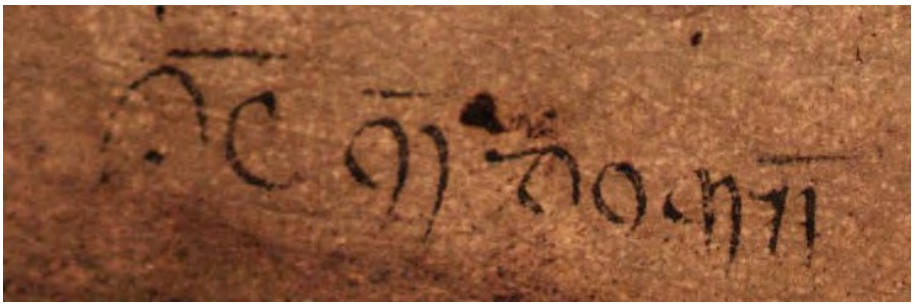

FIGURE 3: Signature of Conchubhar mac Dhomhnaill (Rawlinson B 514, f. iii^{v}).
Photo: Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

for there is little reason to doubt that the name written in majuscule beneath the illustration of Colum Cille is to be taken as just that. Ó Cuív states that this reads 'CC M DOMN'.[71] For typographical reasons he omits the suspension-strokes over the second C, the M and the final N. He also omits a *spiritus asper* over the D, and, most importantly, possibly influenced by the commonplace use of the 'CC' abbreviation for the name 'Colum Cille', he misreads the first character as a conventional C, when it is in fact a 'reversed' C, the brevigraph

[71] Ó Cuív, *Catalogue* I, p. 270.

for *con*.[72] The signature should therefore be expanded: '*CONCUBHAR MAC* DHOMN*AILL*'. While the identification of this artist will remain elusive, it is worth noting that in the Í Chléirigh genealogies the names Conchubhar and Domhnall occur in the case of nephews and cousins of the scribe of Rawlinson B 514, Giolla Riabhach Ó Cléirigh.[73] It is probable that 'Conchubhar mac Dhomhnaill' was an Ó Cléirigh.

This question of the identity of manuscript decorators in the Gaelic context is an important if fugitive one. A reasonable working assumption is that they belonged to the learned classes, and were probably often the scribes themselves or close associates, and this is borne out by the signature to the Colum Cille portrait. Moving forward some forty years, there can be little doubt that the artist who made the gallery of four Passion drawings followed by nine miniatures of De Burgo personages in full armour, and a full-page family coat of arms in the Book of the de Burgos[74] also came from within the Gaelic tradition, and, given the strong Í Uiginn presence in this manuscript, that he was perhaps a kinsman of Domhnall Óg Ó hUiginn who worked on the *Tiomna Nvadh*. This vellum manuscript was created in the 1570s as an illustrated family dossier for Seaán Búrc († 1580), head of the Norman-Irish Mac William Burkes of Mayo, and it is well planned and laid out. Prose-texts in Irish on land- and property-rights, and six pages in Latin on genealogical affinities, precede the

[72] All of this is clearly visible in the reproduction in volume II of Ó Cuív's *Catalogue* (Plate 31).

[73] Paul Walsh, *The Ó Cléirigh family of Tír Conaill [...] with the Ó Cléirigh genealogies* (Dublin, 1938), p. 34.

[74] TCD MS 1440 (F.4.13), ff. 17r–24r. Like many other family books of the time, this manuscript is incomplete, with space left for future additions. Described T.K. Abbott & E.J. Gwynn, *Catalogue of the Irish manuscripts in the library of Trinity College, Dublin* (Dublin, 1921), pp. 318–20. Commentary: Hubert Thomas Knox, *The history of the county of Mayo to the close of the sixteenth century* (Dublin, 1908), pp. 351–56; Martin J. Blake, 'William de Burgh, progenitor of the Burkes in Ireland', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 7/2 (1911), pp. 83–101; Knott, *Tadhg Dall* II, pp. 254–55; Tomás Ó Raghallaigh, 'Seanchas na mBúrcach', *Galway Archaeological and Historical Society journal* 13 (1926–1927), pp. 50–60, 101–37; ('Seanchas Búrcach') 14 (1928–1929), pp. 30–51, 142–66; Bernadette Cunningham & Raymond Gillespie, 'Manuscript cultures in early modern Mayo', *Mayo history and society: Interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county*, ed. Gerard Moran & Nollaig Ó Muraíle (Dublin, 2014), pp. 183–305, 193–99.

gallery, which is then followed by two lengthy bardic poems addressed to Seaán Búrc by Ó hUiginn poets on the Norman ancestry of the De Burgos and their right to Ireland.[75] As with the Colum Cille frontispiece, the artistic element here is not extraneous: the bardic poems occur as part of the same gathering as six of the drawings.[76] The positioning of the poems relative to the other texts is comparable to that of the bardic poetry in the Colum Cille manuscript. The poems crystalise in the highest literary form of the time the matter contained in the earlier prose-texts; while the portraits of the De Burgo personnel could be used to illustrate both, especially quatrains 27–50 of Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn's poem, where those personages are all mentioned.

There is nothing comparable to these illustrations in Irish manuscript tradition. The four images of the Passion are remarkable in their iconography,[77] showing the possible influence of Books of Hours[78] or contemporary woodcuts.[79] The image of Christ carrying the cross incorporates representations of contemporary soldiers.[80] The framed images of the De Burgo figures that follow the Passion images are stark and outstanding against stylised coloured backgrounds, some dominated with cubes and asterisks, and accompanied in many cases by captions in Irish, of varying levels of palaeographical formality.[81]

[75] Tomás Ó Raghallaigh, *Filí agus filidheacht Chonnacht* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1938), pp. 147–63; Knott, *Tadhg Dall*, Poem 17.

[76] The drawings are spread across two gatherings: ff. 15–20 and ff. 21–28; blanks are ff. 15, 16, 23v, 24v, 25. My thanks to Dr John Gillis for providing me with a quire map of this section.

[77] Henry & Marsh-Micheli, 'Manuscripts and illumination, 1169–1603', pp. 809–15.

[78] Colum Hourihane, *Gothic art in Ireland, 1169–1550: Enduring vitality* (New Haven & London, 2003), pp. 142–44.

[79] Henry & Marsh-Micheli, 'Manuscripts and illumination, 1169–1603', p. 810; Bernadette Cunningham, 'Illustrations of the Passion of Christ in the *Seanchas Búrcach* manuscript', *Art and devotion in late medieval Ireland*, ed. Rachel Moss, Colmán Ó Clabaigh & Salvador Ryan (Dublin, 2006), pp. 16–32, at p. 23.

[80] Carpenter & Moss, *Art and architecture of Ireland*, p. 67; thought by Hourihane (*Gothic art*, pp. 143–44) to be 'members of the Burkes dressed as knights'.

[81] With the formal caption to the portrait of Riocard Mór (f. 19r) may be contrasted the unruled caption over Seaán Búrc and the even less formal captions that accompanying the portraits of Éamonn na Féasóige (f. 21v) and his son Riocard (f. 22r).

Figure 4: Seaán Búrc (TCD MS 1440, f. 24r).
Photo: Trinity College Library.

The finest miniature is the final one (f. 24r),[82] representing the manuscript's patron Seaán Búrc dressed in chain-mail, helmet, red hose, spurred shoes and holding a lance, astride a white horse with plaited mane, red bridle and ornamental saddle-cloth, riding rough terrain against a blue sky with clouds. The caption, in Irish, tells of Seaán's military struggles. Together with the possible owner-portrait of Maghnus Ó Domhnaill in Rawlinson B 514, these are the only known manuscript portraits of patrons from the medieval Gaelic world.

This juxtaposition of Gaelic script and full-page chivalric/heraldic illustrations, unprecedented in Gaelic manuscript tradition, points to an element of cultural and artistic versatility among the learned orders of north Connacht. This is all the more remarkable when viewed beside another near-contemporary house-book, the poem-book of the Ó hEadhra family – containing the work of Domhnall Óg Ó hUiginn, mentioned above – dated to 1597 and written by Ó hUiginn scribes in nearby Co. Sligo, a vellum manuscript created very much within the traditional style of layout and decoration.[83] The De Burgo book is a clear statement of identity, celebrating the Norman lineage of the family in a context of Gaelic scholarship, and the creators of the book were tailoring their skills to the requirements of such a book. In so doing, the presence of insular minuscule script on the same page with a non-native decorative style becomes a visual statement of the purpose of the book as a whole: the representation of this family as Gaelicised European nobility. This is not just a statement of identity, but, in the context of Elizabethan Ireland, a political statement also, comparable to that of the Nugent family, who argued for the eminence of Gaelic culture and its compatibility with allegiance to the crown.[84]

The works we have been looking at were created for powerful chieftains. This element of patronage surfaces again in the manuscript of poems addressed to Cú Chonnacht Mág Uidhir, lord of Fermanagh (1566–1589), a manuscript

[82] Carpenter and Moss, *Art and architecture of Ireland*, p. 396. A blank was left after this, which was meant to bear a drawing of Seaán's father, but which was never executed.

[83] NLI MS G 1303; McKenna, *The Book of O'Hara*; Ó Macháin, 'Two Nugent manuscripts', p. 123.

[84] Ó Macháin, 'Two Nugent manuscripts'.

that was created specifically for him.[85] In this manuscript we are treated to a tour de force of experimentation in the decoration of the initial-letters that grace twenty-one of the twenty-four poems. These letters display a thorough engagement with non-Gaelic models of decoration, something hinted at in earlier manuscripts where a cross-over in personnel between the secular and religious scriptoria is probable.[86] The Mág Uidhir initials derive from exposure to English or Continental models, and a study of this decoration has been presented elsewhere.[87]

The additional importance of this manuscript is that it enables us to see how, once assimilated, such decorative influences might have spread. Rather than looking at what are now isolated incidences of Renaissance-influenced manuscript decoration therefore, in this case we get a hint of how decorative styles might have migrated between manuscripts at the time, for we can trace the direct influence of the Mág Uidhir decoration in another poem-book, that of the Ó Raghallaigh family of east Bréifne (Co. Cavan).[88] This manuscript, Cambridge, Add. 3082 ff. 1–16, is an incremental or composite *duanaire* (poem-book), and has been described by cataloguers as comprising three sections.[89]

[85] Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, NKS 268 B fol.; *Duanaire Mhéig Uidhir: The poembook of Cú Chonnacht Mág Uidhir Lord of Fermanagh, 1566–1589*, ed. David Greene (Dublin, 1972).

[86] An outstanding example is the fourteenth-century Book of Uí Mhaine (William O'Sullivan, 'The Book of Uí Maine formerly the Book of Ó Dubhagáin: Scripts and structure', *Éigse* 23 (1989), pp. 151–66, at p. 156); the sixteenth-century Leinster manuscript, MS Egerton 1782, f. 33 displays a small and much less impressive sample of initial letters of the Gothic tradition in use in a Gaelic text (Flower, *Catalogue* II, p. 259). As mentioned already, one of the obvious conduits of external influence on Gaelic manuscript-decoration must have been exposure to individual manuscripts of the parallel tradition. For example, among the items identified by Aisling Byrne ('Earls of Kildare and their books', p. 132) in the Kildare library is what is now MS M.105 in the Morgan Library, New York: a French Book of Hours from the fifteenth century, replete with decorative borders of vegetation and rinceaux of a type found in the Mág Uidhir manuscript; a token of what may have been more widely available for viewing and emulation by Gaelic scribes.

[87] Ó Macháin, 'Notes on the decoration in the *duanaire* of Cú Chonnacht Mág Uidhir'.

[88] Cambridge University Library, MS Add. 3082; *Poems on the O'Reillys*, ed. James Carney (Dublin, 1950).

[89] Pádraig de Brún & Máire Herbert, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in Cambridge libraries* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 8–12.

Though written on vellum, these sections combined give an impression of the transitional state of the manuscript tradition at this time. For example, the colophon on f. 6v (in the third section), dated 1620, refers to this scribe's exemplar being an old blind man who had memorised the poems thirty years earlier. The same colophon refers to the scribe writing poems in another manuscript, a paper (*paibér*) one, now no longer extant, it would seem.[90]

It is the section represented by ff. 1–3 (a disturbed gathering) that is of interest here, however. It contains five poems (one of which is acephalous), four addressed to Pilib Ó Raghallaigh, who was killed in 1596, and one to his son Aodh. These poems were inscribed between 3 May and 24 June 1599, as we learn from two colophons (ff. 1v, 3v), the latter giving the scribe's location as 'Glend Ghaibhnend da ngoirter Glenn Gaibhle anos' (Glangelvin, parish of Templeport, barony of Tullyhaw, Co. Cavan). Both colophons contain quasi-annalistic entries recording national events of the day – respectively, the arrival in Ireland of the earl of Essex, and of two ships laden with arms from the King of Spain – comments that show the scribe's awareness of the outside world and of the momentous times in which he was living.

The four complete poems in this gathering all contain initial letters that are startling in their similarity to the style of some of those in the manuscript written for Cú Chonnacht Mág Uidhir. Three colours are used, red, green and black, and it is interesting to see these colours being extended to the *litterae notabiliores* of the individual quatrains in the poems, which are alternately coloured red and green, and to the line-filling scrolls and spirals, in evidence only on f. 1v, which are randomly coloured red and green also. The initial letters are R, F, C and B. They are described here according to the schema established for the description of the Mág Uidhir letters.[91]

1. 1r1. **R** [Poem 1] 4 cm. 6-line x 3-letter space, centred on bounding lines, front of bowl and foot of leg intruding on text; shaft in left margin, partly obscured by binding-guard. Rubricated. Collared terminals. Shaft terminates below in human hand with index finger pointing downwards,

[90] Ó Macháin, 'Gaelic paper manuscript', p. 40.
[91] Ó Macháin, 'Notes on decoration', pp. 116–24.

FIGURE 5: Letter R with two bird-head terminals and terminal claw (NKS 268 B fol., f. 13r), comparable to terminals in letters B and F in Cambridge Add. 3082, Figure 7. Photo: Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen.

FIGURE 6: Letter T with dog-head and fist terminals (NKS 268 B fol., f. 14r), comparable to terminals in letters C and R in Cambridge Add. 3082, Figure 7. Photo: Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen.

(A) (B)

(C) (D)

FIGURE 7: Initials R, F, C and B from CUL MS Add. 3082, ff. 1r, 2r, 2v and 3r.
Photo: Courtesy Cambridge University Library.

and above in dog-head with open mouth from which bowl of letter emerges. Bowl and leg drawn as continuous piece, coloured red, leg terminating in inward-turned human foot. Design of shaft similar to that of head-stroke of initial T in Mág Uidhir f. 14r.

2. 2ra10. **F** [Poem III] 4.5 cm. Two arms of letter set in 3-line x 10-letter space; shaft centred on bounding lines and extending for 4 lines below lower arm, terminating in bird-claw. Collared terminals. Text written after execution of initial. Top of shaft branches to left – terminating in a left-turned long-beaked bird-head – and to right for the slightly looped top arm, terminating in a tassel. Lower arm terminates in dog-head displaying teeth and protruding red tongue. Red also used for eye of bird and for terminal collars; letter otherwise coloured green. Terminal bird-head virtually identical to that on 3r below, and to the two on the letter R in Mág Uidhir f. 13r and the single head on the G in Mág Uidhir 19v; tassel terminals in evidence in Mág Uidhir 10r, 11v and 16v; dog-heads with protruding tongues in Mág Uidhir f. 2r and 19r; terminal claws in Mág Uidhir 3v and 13r.

3. 2va1. **C** [Poem IV] 4.5 cm. Centred on bounding lines; differs from the three other initials in that only the two terminals intrude on the text-space (5 lines x 4 letters); text written after execution of initial. (Uniquely, this letter acts as the initial for both quatrain 1 and quatrain 2.) Traditional ribbon-type letter coloured black (similar to black of ink in text), with traces of red and green at terminals. Letter conceived as two components, the shaft – with serrated borders – turned mid-way in an angular bow. Collared terminals. Top terminates in downward looking rabbit head; bottom terminates in closed fist. Animal-head terminals (dogs and cats) on the letter C in Mág Uidhir are discussed in Ó Macháin, 'Decoration', 117; the fist as in L in Mág Uidhir 14r.

4. 3rb1. **B** [Poem V] 3.5 cm. Centred on bounding lines; right-hand side of bowl occupies 3-line x 4-letter space, with ascender in upper margin. Body coloured green within thick black border. Top terminates in bird-head above collar, with turned-down beak, as noted for F above; bowl

formed from a scroll with two parts: a wing, and a tail tapering into a small acanthus leaf. Tail, collar, eye and beak of bird in red. Although this is a poor example, elaborate acanthus decoration is pervasive in Mág Uidhir.

The parallels between the initials in the Mág Uidhir and Ó Raghallaigh manuscripts are too strong to be ignored. The later date of the Ó Raghallaigh book indicates the direction of the influence. We must ask how this came about and whether it could be that the same limner was at work on both. Although the Ó Raghallaigh sample of initials is limited, the somewhat inferior nature of those letters may make the latter suggestion doubtful; confined to three colours, however, and perhaps affected by limitations of which we know nothing today, this possibility cannot be discounted. As the initials were inserted prior to the writing of the text, which is another point of difference between this manuscript and the Mág Uidhir *duanaire*, the decorator and scribe, if they are not identical, clearly worked together on these leaves. In either case, access to the Mág Uidhir manuscript at some stage seems a certainty.

A connection, albeit circumstantial, between both books occurs in the person who is the subject of additional quatrains in the first four of the five poems copied here, and in many of the poems to Pilib Ó Raghallaigh in the other sections of the manuscript. That is Pilib's wife Róis/Róisi, who by the time of writing of ff. 1–3 was his widow. She was also a daughter of Cú Chonnacht Mág Uidhir, commissioner of the Mág Uidhir manuscript.[92] A link such as this between both manuscripts is intriguing, but beyond it we cannot go without speculation. Róis might have supplied and dictated the pattern of lettering she wanted in these poems; or we could speculate that she herself may have been the limner of this and the Mág Uidhir manuscript: there is no reason why she could not have been. Whatever the answer might be to this question, it is undeniable that in the Mág Uidhir and Ó Raghallaigh manuscripts we have the only example identified to date of the sharing of a new, externally-influenced style of decoration between Gaelic manuscripts. The fact that the Ó Raghallaigh

[92] Carney, *Poems on the O'Reillys*, lines 211, 2314, 2326, 2447.

manuscript is one of the last of the vellum poem-books adds poignancy to its status in the history of the materiality of the Irish book.

Conclusion

Post-print book culture in Ireland was a complex phenomenon. Printed books in Irish emerged as part of the machinery of religious and political colonisation, but with strong and undeniable links to the manuscript scholars of the Gaelic heartland. Combining a study of this emergent print culture with an examination of innovative features in Gaelic manuscript-design of the time allows us to widen our view of the history of the book in Renaissance Ireland. It allows us also to identify accommodations between Ireland's Gaelic learned classes and developments that emanated from Renaissance Europe, of which print is a significant but not an exclusive element. We can flesh out these accommodations by seeking to identify some of the personnel involved. With this widened perspective we can then consider the nexus of art, technology, materiality and text, and appreciate the participation of the scholar-scribes who figure largely among the dramatis personae of the history of the Irish book at this time. Such a consideration leads to an interpretation of the books of this era – manuscript and printed – as complex statements of identity.

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